

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
ag 81 stb

LIBRARY
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

March 17, 1924.

STATUS OF AGRICULTURAL BILLS BEFORE CONGRESS.

The Norbeck-Burtness bill, carrying an appropriation of \$50,000,000 to assist in promoting diversified farming in wheat areas, was rejected by the Senate on March 13 by a vote of 41 to 32. As originally drawn the bill was intended to apply only to Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana. It was reported out by the Senate Committee on Agriculture with an amendment increasing the appropriation to \$75,000,000 so that the proposed relief could be given to farmers in any part of the country. This amendment was rejected by the Senate. Another amendment submitted by Senator Bursum of Montana, providing for an appropriation to stabilize banks and trust companies in agricultural districts, was likewise rejected.

The McNary-Haugen Bill, creating a Government corporation to stabilize prices of farm products, was reported out by the Senate Agricultural Committee on March 1. Amendments to the bill are to be offered by the Committee on the floor of the Senate. These amendments, it is expected, will include a clause reducing the life of the Corporation from ten to five years and a provision that the Government shall buy protected commodities immediately they sink below proclaimed ratio prices instead of waiting until they drop ten per cent below those prices, as the bill originally proposed. Another amendment which the Committee may offer would base ratio prices on yearly instead of monthly pre-war commodity price averages. The Committee has given some consideration to a proposal for handling meat products by a bounty scheme under which exporters would act as agents of the Government in foreign trade. The House Committee on Agriculture has not yet taken action on the bill.

No report on the Norris-Sinclair bill, providing for the creation of a \$100,000,000 corporation to act as a Government agency in marketing farm products, has been made by a majority of the Senate Committee on Agriculture. A minority report on it, however, has been made by three members -- Senators George Norris of Nebraska, Chairman; E. F. Ladd of North Dakota, and Magnus Johnson of Minnesota. The minority report declares that in the opinion of the signatories the Norris bill is preferable to the McNary bill as a measure for relieving the present agricultural emergency because it offers a permanent rather than a temporary plan and undertakes to reduce the cost of distributing farm products. In expressing these views the minority group declares it is not opposed to the McNary bill, but merely prefers the Norris bill. It adds that the decision of the majority to report the McNary bill does not imply that a majority of the Committee is opposed to the Norris bill but only that as between the two bills the preponderance of opinion in the Committee is in favor of the McNary bill.

Senator Gooding's bill, S. 185, authorizing the creation of a Government corporation to buy wheat at a guaranteed price of \$1.50 a bushel, has been reported out from the Senate Committee on Agriculture with amendments but without recommendation. Senator Gooding has announced his willingness to withdraw the bill in favor of the McNary-Haugen bill.

Two bills introduced by Senator W. J. Harris of Georgia providing for simultaneous publication of cotton ginning reports by the Bureau of the Census and cotton crop reports by the Department of Agriculture have been reported out by the Senate Committee on Agriculture. One of them has also been reported out by the House Committee on the Census. These bills provide that ginning reports shall

start August 1 instead of September 1, as formerly. This is done to take care of early maturing cotton in the ginning reports. One of the bills contains a clause directing discontinuance of the intention to plant reports started last year by the Department of Agriculture in so far as these reports relate to cotton.

The Agricultural Appropriation Bill, carrying a total of \$56,758,513, was reported to the House February 22 by Representative Anderson of Minnesota from the Committee on Appropriations. This sum, of which \$39,058,503 is for the department proper and \$17,700,000 for special road items, compares with a total regular annual appropriation for the fiscal year 1924 of \$72,841,453. The 1924 appropriation included \$3,304,800 for the payment of increased compensation to employees and \$32,300,000 for the cooperative construction of roads.

As agreed to, the bill carries \$471,312 less than the estimates of the Budget Bureau. It shows a net reduction under the 1924 appropriation of \$16,082,940. Of this reduction \$14,600,000 occurs in the cooperative road construction funds, the amount for forest roads and trails having been increased \$1,700,000 and the amount for construction of roads under the Federal highway system reduced \$16,300,000. The decrease for road work makes the amount appropriated for this purpose \$800,000 less than the budget estimate. In explaining the highway appropriation deduction, the committee said it believes the appropriations should simply suffice to cover actual withdrawals from the Treasury, and should not be based on the extent of the authorizations. This policy, at the estimated rate for expenditures for cooperative road work, will leave a balance of \$437,160.42 in the highway funds at the close of the fiscal year 1925.

In the 1924 appropriations there was an item of \$3,304,800 for the payment of a bonus to employees. In the present bill no provision is made for paying the bonus to field employees because disposition of that part of their pay awaits action by the Personnel Classification Board. This omission accounts for \$2,408,060 of the reduction in the 1925 appropriation as compared with the 1924 appropriation, but this reduction is more in the nature of a postponement than a decrease.

There was also included in the 1924 appropriations an item of \$200,000,000 for printing, binding and distributing publications dealing with diseases of horses and cattle. This item has not been included in the 1925 appropriation because it is not properly an expense chargeable to the conduct of the Department of Agriculture. When these two sums are deducted from the 1924 appropriations for comparative purposes the 1925 appropriation for the department proper instead of showing an apparent decrease of \$1,428,940 shows a net increase of \$1,125,120.

Introduced at the First Session of the 68th Congress.

GRAZING ON PUBLIC LANDS -

S. 2325 - Senator L. C. Phipps of Colorado.

- - -

Regulation of stock grazing on unreserved public lands of the United States is provided for in this bill. The measure does not affect national forests. It gives the Secretary of the Interior authority to regulate and control unreserved public lands and he may issue regulations prohibiting grazing thereon until permits have been obtained. Two-thirds of the returns from grazing fees would go into the Treasury and the remainder would be paid each year to the State in which the lands were located, for schools and roads. Permits would be made for not more than ten years with preferential rights to certain persons. Areas grazed under permit would be reduced after notice so as to afford grazing privileges to new settlers and residents.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING -

S. 2371. Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas.

- - -

This measure would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to advise and assist cooperative associations in marketing by the promotion of sound business practices and by establishing uniform standards for commodity classification. It also provides for the inspection of products, the arbitration of disputes, the registration of approved dealers and handlers, and a market news service. The Secretary is authorized to investigate and report on conditions affecting the demand for farm products in the United States and abroad. He may certify persons as approved handlers or dealers when they make application for approval and agree to follow prescribed business methods. The Secretary may also provide for the organization of boards to adjust disputes involving grade, quality, condition, and value of products. Reasonable fees would be charged for services given by employees of the Department of Agriculture.

STABILIZING BANKS AND TRUST COMPANIES -

S. 2386. Senator H. O. Bursum of New Mexico.

- - -

The object of this bill is to stabilize banks and trust companies in communities where confidence in such institutions has become impaired. It directs the War Finance Corporation to pay over to the Comptroller of the Currency \$50,000,000 for this purpose. The Comptroller is authorized to make loans to solvent banks to keep them in operation in cases where such aid is necessary. He is also permitted to make loans for the purpose of reopening banks or trust companies that were closed during 1923 or afterwards whenever in his judgment the interests of the community to be served will be promoted by reopening the financial institutions. Although loans by the Comptroller to banks or trust companies may not be for any term exceeding twelve months, extensions or renewals of loans are authorized. Although the War Finance Corporation has power to do some of the things committed to the Comptroller of the Currency in this bill, it has not departed from regular banking methods. Relief of a type which the War Finance Corporation does not furnish is therefore provided for in the Bursum Bill.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL PATENTS BOARD -

S. 2387. Senator Richard P. Ernst of Kentucky.

- - -

Creation of an Interdepartmental Patents Board is provided for in this bill. The Board would control and administer all patents and patent rights owned by the Government. It would issue nonexclusive licenses under patents owned by the United States to private companies when such action seemed in the public interest. All Government employees would be required to register with the Board all applications for patents they may make. The bill expressly provides that any Government employee holding his position under an agreement having the effect of a contract must assign to the Government any patent granted on an invention discovered or developed during his period of Government employment and incident to his line of official duties.

POLLUTION OF NAVIGABLE RIVERS -

S. 2414. Senator Joseph E. Ransdell of Louisiana.

- - -

In this bill it is made unlawful to discharge or drain oil or permit oil to be discharged or to flow from any oil well terminal, refinery, tank, or place of storage in such a way that it will run into a navigable river.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF FOREIGN TRADE -

S. 2435. Senator D. U. Fletcher of Florida.

- - -

This bill authorizes the President whenever he shall declare by proclamation an emergency to exist due to the over-production of any commodity or to economic conditions abroad, to admit free of duty into the United States such commodities as he may specify when they are imported in exchange for specified American commodities. To get the benefits of this Act fifty per cent of the tonnage of such commodities must be carried in American ships.

REGISTRATION OF SEED -

S. 2462. Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas.

- - -

Authority for the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate the production of seeds, promote methods for their improvement and establish standards and requirements for seed stocks is given in this bill. It provides for the registration of specific lots of seed which come up to standard requirements. Registration of seed is not made compulsory and no regulatory or prohibitory action with regard to the sale of poor seed is contemplated. Wide authority is, however, given to the Secretary to establish standards and requirements for registered seed. Heavy penalties are provided in case unscrupulous persons should attempt to sell seed as registered which had not been registered.

REFUNDS FOR LOSSES DUE TO PRICE FIXING -
S. 2480. Senator William B. McKinley of Illinois.

- - -

Compensation for losses resulting from the sale of wheat at fixed prices in 1917, 1918 and 1919 is provided for in this bill. It would allow any person or corporation who sold wheat at the Government guaranteed price in these years to claim from the Government the difference between that price and the price that the wheat would have brought had it been sold in a free market. Claims would be paid out of a congressional appropriation.

FOREST CONSERVATION -
S. 2514. Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas.

- - -

This measure is similar to one introduced by Senator Capper in 1922. Its object is to promote forest conservation and extend the national forests. It would seek this end by placing a tax on timber not grown according to prescribed forest management plans. The Secretary of Agriculture would be authorized to establish certain forest regions and to cooperate in conservation measures with State officials. Regulations for harvesting timber are laid down in the bill and provision is made for payment of a bounty to timber operators cutting timber under the approved methods.

RADIO CONTROL -
S. 2524. Senator Charles L. McNary of Oregon.

- - -

This bill would give the Department of Commerce authority to license and control the operation of radio stations, to establish wave lengths for use by private and Government stations, to lay down rules governing priority in the subject matter of radio communications, and to protect messages from ships against interference.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMMISSION -
S. 2543. Senator R. S. Copeland of New York.

- - -

Creation of a commission of unemployment with three members to be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate is provided for in this bill. The commission would determine where the public interest could best be served by the development of public roads, afforestation, drainage and irrigation of waste lands. Its findings would be available for use in employing idle men during times of economic depression.

FOREIGN TRADE ZONES -

S. 2570. Senator W. L. Jones of Washington.

- - -

Establishment of foreign trade zones in ports of entry of the United States is provided for in this bill, which is similar to measures introduced by Senator Jones in previous sessions of Congress. Foreign commodities could be brought into these zones free of duty and there mixed, sorted, or broken up into small lots for re-export. Manufacturing would not be permitted in the free trade zones.

EXTENDING LAWS TO PORTO RICO -

S.2571. Senator Frank B. Willis of Ohio.

- - -

This bill would extend to Porto Rico the provisions of the Federal Aid Road Law, the Agricultural Credits Law, and the Maternity Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Acts.

NORTHERN PACIFIC LAND GRANTS -

S. J. Res. 82. H. J. Res. 183. Senator I. L.
Lenroot of Wisconsin and Representative.
N. J. Sinnott of Oregon.

- - -

In this bill the Secretary of the Interior is directed to withhold his approval of the adjustment of Northern Pacific land grants and to withhold issuance of any more patents under the Act of July 2, 1864 and the joint resolution of May 31, 1870 until Congress has made an inquiry into the land grants and determined the respective rights of the railway company to the Government.

SPECIAL RELIEF FOR MONTANA -

S. J. Res. 88. H. J. Res. 203. Senator
B. K. Wheeler of Montana and Representative
H. K. Evans of Iowa.

- - -

This bill is similar to one already passed by the Senate making an appropriation to aid farmers in drouth stricken regions of New Mexico. It appropriates \$1,000,000 for loans to Montana farmers to assist them in their spring and fall planting this year. Loans must not in any case exceed \$6 an acre. They may be applied to the purchase of seed, feed, and food, and to defray actual farming expenses. They may not be used for the purchase of equipment. The Secretary is permitted to take a first lien on the crops to be produced as a sufficient security for the loans.

PRODUCTION COST OF FLOUR AND BREAD -

S. Res. 163. Senator R. M. LaFollette of Wisconsin.

- - -

The Federal Trade Commission is directed in this resolution to investigate the production, distribution, transportation, and sale of flour and bread, including by products. It is required to show costs, prices, and profits at each stage in production and distribution from the time wheat leaves the farm until bread is delivered to the consumer. It is also instructed to inquire whether price fixing exists and whether there is an expansion of the bread and flour industry in the direction of monopoly and centralized control.

FEDERAL AID IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION -

H. R. 6722. Representative John M. Robison of Kentucky.

- - -

Amendments to the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 are contained in this bill. It authorizes an annual appropriation of \$100,000,000 for the Federal highway system for each of the three years beginning July 1, 1925. The Secretary of Agriculture is given power to apportion the available funds not later than January for the next fiscal year. Another section of the bill authorizes appropriations to be made to \$10,000,000 for forest roads and trails for each of the fiscal years 1926, 1927 and 1928. There is a provision in the bill that no money shall be apportioned to any State which does not grant reciprocity to motor vehicles licensed by any other State or by the District of Columbia.

BRANCH BANKING -

H. R. 6855. Representative Louis T. McFadden
of Pennsylvania.

- - -

This bill contains clauses which would prohibit national banks from engaging in branch banking in any State which prohibits branch banking. It would also stop the further extension of State wide branch banking to any member bank of the Federal Reserve System. In States where State banks may engage in branch banking, national banks will be permitted similar provisions but only within city limits. Apparently this provision is intended to change the condition which according to a recent ruling of the United States Supreme Court now exists whereby national banks have no power to establish branches and can not even conduct tellers' windows at places other than headquarters. It is also apparently felt that the bill would counteract the ruling of the Federal Reserve Board which provides that member State banks may not establish branches in the cities in which they operate. There is a clause in the bill intended to liberalize that section of the Federal Reserve Act which permits national banks to lend money on real estate. It would allow national banks to lend up to fifty per cent of their time deposits on this character of security and would remove the time limit on such loans.

RECLAMATION FUND APPORTIONMENT -

H. R. 6899. Representative J. B. McClintic
of Oklahoma.

- - -

This bill is intended to provide that funds arising from the sale of public lands benefited by reclamation projects shall be expended in the several States in proportion to the receipts from the sale of lands within those States. A provision to this effect was contained in the original law but later repealed.

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SERVICE -

H. R. 7111. Representative J. C. Ketcham of Michigan.

- - -

Expansion of the service now given by the Department of Agriculture in gathering and publishing information regarding agriculture in foreign countries is provided for in this bill. The bill also provides that the Secretary of State at the request of the Secretary of Agriculture shall designate representatives of the Department of Agriculture in foreign countries as "agricultural attaches with diplomatic standing."

ESTABLISHMENT OF DAIRY BUREAU -

H. R. 7113. Representative G. N. Haugen of Iowa.

- - -

This bill would establish a Dairy Bureau in the Department of Agriculture. It provides that the Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint a Chief of the Bureau of Dairying who will investigate dairying and furnish information about the industry. The bill authorizes the Secretary to transfer to this Bureau such activities of the Department of Agriculture as relate primarily to dairying.

LOANS TO COOPERATIVE MARKETING ASSOCIATIONS -

H. R. 7267. Representative Samuel B. Hill of Washington.

- - -

This measure would authorize three to nine month loans to cooperative marketing associations on warehouse receipts or shipping documents on apples. Heretofore apples have not been classed by the Federal Farm Loan Board as a staple agricultural product on which cooperative associations may get loans.

FEDERAL FARM LOAN ACT -

H. R. 7268. Representative L. J. Dickinson of Iowa.

- - -

Under this bill Federal land banks would be authorized to increase their loan limit on the value of permanent insured improvements up to sixty per cent. The present loan limit is twenty per cent. No change would be made by the bill in the loan limit on the value of land.

CREATING NEW LAND AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
H. R. 7352. Representative George Huddleston of Alabama.

- - -

This bill would create a new Federal government department which would be known as the Department of Land and Natural Resources. It would be administered by a Secretary appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, and by three Assistant Secretaries. One of the Assistant Secretaries would take charge of matters relating to agricultural land, the second would take charge of matters relating to mineral land, and the third would take charge of matters relating to forest and water resources. The bill directs a census to be made of unused land and calls on the President to make recommendations for the best way to open up such land for the use of former soldiers, sailors and marines. It would create a commission of employment with authority to open up various natural resources so as to provide employment for soldiers, sailors and marines. The principal object of the legislation is to assemble in one department the administration of the specified natural resources and to provide means for opening them to veterans of the World War.

FEDERAL FARM LOAN ACT -

H. R. 7407. Delegate Dan A. Sutherland of Alaska.

- - -

Extension of the provisions of the Agricultural Credits Act of 1923 to Porto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska is provided for in this bill. It authorizes the establishment of a branch Federal land bank in Hawaii and Porto Rico. Agents of any Federal land bank may be appointed to represent that institution in the Territory of Alaska. Loans in these territories would be limited to terms of twenty years and a limit of \$10,000,000 would be placed on loans to individual borrowers.

FINANCING AGRICULTURAL EXPORT TRADE -

S. 2710. H. R. 7498. Senator M.B. Dial of
South Carolina, and Representative B. G. Lowrey of Mississippi.

- - -

This legislation provides for the use of funds on deposit with the Alien Property Custodian for the purpose of financing American agricultural exports. An Alien Property Trade Investment Corporation would be created with a capital of \$150,000,000, all subscribed by the Alien Property Custodian. Consent to this use of their money would be required, through their respective governments, of those whose property created the fund on deposit with the Custodian. Management of the Investment Corporation would be placed in a board consisting of the Secretary of the Treasury, the Alien Property Custodian, and three other persons to be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. Authority would be given the Corporation to advance credits for the purpose of financing exports of farm products. It would take liens on shipments as security in the case of materials to be used in manufacture abroad. In the case of

farm products it would be permitted in its discretion to accept notes or trade acceptances as sufficient security for loans. Net income of the Corporation would go to the Alien Property Custodian for the credit of the persons whose funds were used in the financing operation. The bill provides that the United States shall not be liable for any losses incurred.

WAR FINANCE CORPORATION -

H. J. Res. 172. Representative L. J. Dickinson of Iowa.

- - -

Besides extending the life of the War Finance Corporation to December 31, 1924, this resolution would authorize the Corporation to accept as collateral certain securities which it does not accept at present. Among these are real estate items. The Corporation would be authorized to make advances on the security of first or second liens on real estate for the payment of interest and taxes due on real estate.

SPECIAL RELIEF FOR OKLAHOMA -

H. Res. 202. Representative T. D. McKeown
of Oklahoma.

- - -

This bill appropriates \$1,000,000 to enable the Secretary of Agriculture to make loans for the spring of 1924 to farmers in boll weevil, drouth, and flood stricken areas of Oklahoma. Such loans would be available for the purchase of seed, feed, food, and to pay actual farming expenses. They would not be for use in buying equipment. Loans would not exceed \$6 an acre, and first liens on the crops to be produced would be accepted as security.

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MARKETING -

H. R. 7321. Representative J. D. Beck of Wisconsin.

- - -

Provision is made in this bill for the incorporation of the United States Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association. The measure is intended to provide for a national cooperative marketing system controlled by producers of agricultural products. The duty of organizing the proposed association is given to the Secretary of Agriculture. The corporation would have power to own, store, and sell farm products, to fix equitable prices on the goods, to own,

or otherwise acquire storage facilities and equipment for delivering products to consumers, and generally to transact business on a cooperative basis. A loan of \$10,000,000 would be made to the corporation from the United States treasury. The loan would bear interest at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and would have to be repaid within ten years. There is a clause in the bill exempting the corporation from the anti-trust laws.

PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS -

H. R. 7110. Representative G. N. Haugen of Iowa.
- - -

This bill would give the Secretary of Agriculture power to fix rules and regulations for weighing and docking livestock in public stockyards. It authorizes him to charge reasonable fees for this service. Weighing or docking livestock in stockyards except in accordance with the rules laid down by the Secretary is prohibited.

MEAT INSPECTION -

S. 2165. H. R. 5717. Senator George Norris
of Nebraska and Representative G. N.
Haugen of Iowa.
- - -

This legislation would amend the Meat Inspection Act to provide that carcasses and parts and containers shall bear labels stating the true names of the articles, that all inspected products shall be marked "Inspected and Passed" when shipped in interstate or foreign commerce, and that inspection shall be withdrawn from establishments which violate any regulation promulgated for the enforcement of the Meat Inspection Act. The bill would give wider discretion to the department in connection with the disposition of fats of condemned meat products so as to permit their utilization in the industrial arts. It would permit reinspection of meat previously passed and its condemnation if then found unfit for human food.
